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Contact:

Kelly Ferrara
(314) 991-4641 x113
Cell (314) 799-1573

State Emergency Response Reform Enters Implementation Phase

Time Critical Diagnosis team reconvenes to implement Missouri's first-of-its-kind heart attack and stroke emergency care reform

Jefferson City, MO. (September 29, 2008) – Missouri's Time Critical Diagnosis Advisory Committee and work groups will meet Tuesday, September 30, 2008, to launch the implementation phase of Missouri's statewide emergency care reform for sufferers of stroke and ST-Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI), a common form of heart attack.

While Missouri's heart disease and stroke death rates are declining, heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the state. Stroke ranks third. When a Missouri resident suffers a stroke or heart attack, their survival and recovery directly depends on the time it takes to receive treatment. This system-wide reform will provide Missouri with a statewide system to provide the right care, at the right place, in the right time

In July, Governor Blunt signed legislation that expanded the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' (DHSS) authority to promulgate rules and regulations to improve care for heart disease and stroke patients. Starting this month, health care providers and advocates will work with the state to craft the regulations to support this advanced level of care. Missouri is the first state in the nation to enact legislation creating a statewide system of care for STEMI and stroke that is modeled after the care provided for trauma patients. Health outcomes are expected to improve as advances are implemented.

"Missouri is distinctively positioned to be a leader in advancing care for stroke and STEMI patients," explained DHSS Director Jane Drummond. "In order to build on the momentum and collaboration invested to date, the Department is moving forward on plans to implement priority recommendations generated by the Time Critical Diagnosis (TCD) Task Force."

The TCD system was developed under the direction of the Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force. First launched in 2003, the initiative was led by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) in collaboration with the Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH). Throughout 2007-2008 the initiative drew together more than 100 emergency medical care experts from Missouri committed to improving health outcomes based on this reform legislation.

About DHSS: *The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services protects and promotes quality of life and health for all Missourians by developing and implementing programs and systems that provide: information and education, effective regulation and oversight, quality services and surveillance of diseases and conditions.*

About MFH: *Established in 2000, the Missouri Foundation for Health is the largest non-governmental funder of community health activities in the state. It is dedicated to serving the uninsured, underinsured and underserved in 84 Missouri counties and the City of St. Louis. For more information about MFH, visit www.mffh.org.*

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Editors Note: The Time Critical Diagnosis team is made up of state-wide Missouri stakeholders and participants from your areas that are available for interview. For more information, visit the program's Web site at www.360365.org or please contact Kelly Ferrara at (314) 991-4641 x113 or (314) 799-1573.